

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed May 21, 2003 has been reviewed and carefully considered. Claims 6 and 9 have been amended. Claims 6 and 8 to 11 are pending in this application, with claims 6 and 9 being the independent claims. Reconsideration of the above-identified application, as amended, and in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

It is noted that the file does not contain a Patent Drawing Review by the Patent Office Draftsperson. It is requested that this Review be undertaken and a Review by the Draftsperson be issued in response to this Amendment.

In the Office Action mailed May 21, 2003, claims 6 and 8 to 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,574,566 ("Eaves") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,092,104 ("Zalenka") and U.S. Patent No. 4,243,186 ("Peter").

Independent claims 6 and 9 have been amended to recite that the air that is blown onto the wrapper feeding table is blown between the wrapper end and the surface of the wrapper feeding table.

In accordance with the invention as recited in amended independent claims 6 and 9, the end of a wide wrapper sheet is detected by drawing the end of the wrapper backwards over a detector. To accomplish this detection, the end of the wrapper must be reliably led over a feeding table and the detectors. The end of the wrapper is so led by employing air nozzles that blow air between the wrapper and feeding table. The air nozzles provide an air cushion between the table and the wrapper sheet, which guarantees a free flow of the wrapper. Simultaneously, the air flow between two flat surfaces creates a negative pressure that keeps the wrapper flat over the air cushion which ensures that the wrapper end will be detected.

As acknowledged by the Examiner, Eaves does not disclose that a leading edge of the web is guided to the drawing rollers by an air nozzle, as recited in independent claims 6 and 9, or that the supply roll is turned in a reverse direction until the leading edge is sensed on the table, also as recited in independent claims 6 and 9. Also as acknowledged by the Examiner, the combination of Eaves and Zelenka does not disclose the supply roll being turned in a reverse direction until the leading edge is sensed on the table. As discussed below, the combination of Eaves, Peter and Zelenka is an improper combination and even if it is not, does not result in the invention recited in amended independent claims 6 and 9.

Peter relates to a technical field far removed from that recited in independent claims 6 and 9 and far removed from that of Eaves. Both Eaves and independent claims 6 and 9 relate to machines for wrapping while Peter related to magnetic tape used to store data for computers or for audio or video recordings. It is therefore improper to combine the teachings of Peter with Eaves, and to apply Peter to the invention recited in independent claims 6 and 9. Furthermore, as stated in the Amendment dated February 14, 2003, Peter discloses a feeding apparatus for a magnetic tape in which a reel feeding the tape is rotated opposite to the feeding direction in order to get the end of the tape in a desired position, then the tape is sucked forward by vacuum. In the Office Action (page 3), the Examiner states that Peter discloses that "the leading edge is blown toward the drawing means by an air flow (76) which is being read as an air nozzle, since air flow must inherently originate at a nozzle of some type." However, the Examiner's entire statement is not accurate. The abstract of Peter clearly states that air is "sucked ... through the flow path" and thus "pulls and guides" the free end portion of the magnetic tape. (See also, col. 2, lines 54-61). Air is "sucked" through the perforated spool 48 (shown as "Vac" in Fig. 13). (col. 5, lines 36-38). In fact, Peter emphasizes that "Gravity and high pressure directional air jets are not utilized." (col. 5, lines 18-19). Thus, the sucking method of feeding the tape of Peter is completely different than that blowing method recited in applicant's independent claims 6 and 9. Also, Peter does not disclose not a forced-flow of air between two surfaces, as recited in independent claims 6 and 9. Additionally, although the Examiner states that Peter has a "flowpath table side" (Office Action paragraph 9), where the "table" appears in Peter is unclear. Peter does not appear to any kind of table over which the tape passes.

In Zelenka, air is blown over and on top of loose ends of a mouth of a bag. The air is not blown between the loose ends of the bag and the surface supporting the ends of the bag. Although such an air stream as disclosed in Zelenka will straighten the loose ends of the mouth of the bags, the air is not blown between the supporting table and the ends, as recited in amended independent claims 6 and 9. The kind of air stream disclosed in Zelenka does not therefore provide an air cushion over a flat surface, as recited in amended independent claims 6 and 9. In addition, Zelenka relates to a bag handling device, not to a device for handling a wrapper web, as recited in independent claims 6 and 9; therefore, Zelenka relates to a different technical field than the claimed invention, or for that matter, the technical fields of Peter and Eaves.

Thus, it would be improper to combine Eaves, Peter and Zelenka, and even if these three references were combines, their combination would not result in the invention recited in independent claims 6 and 9.

Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 6 and 9 are patentable. Dependent claims 8 are patentable for the same reasons that independent claim 6 is patentable; dependent claims 10 and 11 are patentable for the same reasons that independent claim 9 is patentable. Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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